

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 8757

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: CONTINUING CONTROVERSY OVER TV BROADCASTS

REF ATHENS 8326

1. THE BROUHAHA CONTINUES OVER THE ALLEGED "PENETRATION" OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA BY LEFTISTS. THE FIRST HEAD -- THAT OF TV DIRECTOR SPYROS PAYATAKIS -- HAS ROLLED, AS PRESAGED IN REFTEL, WITH MORE EXPECTED STILL TO COME.

2. CONFLICT ORIGINATED WITH CHARGES OF DISTORTING HISTORY THAT GREW OUT OF TELEVISION BROADCASTS COMMEMORATING "OHI DAY" ON OCT 28. THE PROGRAM LIONIZED THE COMMUNIST ROLE IN THE POST-1940 RESISTANCE TO GERMAN AND ITALIAN FORCES. AMONG OTHER TPNGS, THE ELAS ANTHEM WAS PLAYED.

3. UNDERSECRETARY (TO PM) LAMBRIAS APPEARS SAFE AFTER HAVING SUPPORTED A NEW DRAFT LAW WHICH WOULD CONVERT EIRT TO THE STATUS OF A PUBLIC CORPORATION, ALONG BRITISH LINES. THE NEW ORGAN WILL BE GOVERNED REPORTEDLY BY A BOARD OF DIRECTORS WHICH WILL BE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO GROUP OF 50 PUBLIC MEMBERS.

4. PLAINLY UNSAFE, HOWEVER, IS EIRT DIRECTOR GENERAL VLACHOS WHO IS UNDER INCREASING FIRE AND WHOSE DISMISSAL IS RUMORED

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IMMINENT. VLACHOS TRIED TO ASSIGN BRUNT OF BLAME TO

BRIGHT, YOUNG PAYATAKIS WHO WAS NOT A CAREER CIVIL SERVANT AND WHO ONLY RECENTLY RETURNED TO GREECE AFTER 20 YEARS ABROAD. PAYATAKIS WAS ORDERED TO SUBMIT REPORT ON BROADCASTS, AND COMPLIED WITH PLAINLY UNEXPECTED VIGOR. HE SAID VLACHOS PERSONALLY APPROVED THE CONTENT OF ALL PROGRAMS IN QUESTION. WHEN PAYATAKIS OBJECTED TO SOME TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF PRESENTATIONS, HE SAID, HE WAS SUMMARILY OVERRULED.

5. EIRT LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN FURTHER ROCKED BY REVELATION OF A HIGHLY CRITICAL REPORT ON EIRT LAST APRIL BY DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF BBC NEWS. AMONG THE PROBLEMS PINPOINTED IN THE REPORT ARE EIRT'S LACK OF A PERMANENT STAFF, WORST-QUALITY FILMS THE BBC MAN HAD EVER SEEN, LACK OF OBJECTIVE OR RELIABLE NEWS, ETC.

6. GREECE'S OTHER RADIO-TV SERVICE, YENED (ARMED FORCES) IS CURRENTLY FREE OF SUCH CRITICISM AND SEEMS TO CONSISTENTLY PRODUCE HIGHER-QUALITY PRODUCT. INDEED, ONE ASPECT OF THE NEW DRAFT LAW TO REORGANIZE EIRT SOUGHT TO UNITE THE TWO SYSTEMS BUT THIS WAS STIFLED, REPORTEDLY, BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE.

KUBISCH

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